

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH
O F
St. PETER in EXON,
Before the Right Worshipful the
MAYOR and CHAMBER,
On *August* the 6th, 1723;

Being the Anniversary of the D E-
LIVERANCE of that City from the
Cornish INSURRECTION, in the Reign
of King *Edward* the VIth.

By JOHN FISHER, B. A.

L O N D O N:

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A
SERMON

Preached at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH

OF

St PETER in EXON

Before the Right Worshipful the

MAYOR



On the 17th

ing the Anniversary of the Death
LIVREANCE of the City of Exeter
Growth and UPRIGHTNESS in the Reign
of King Edward the Sixth.

By JOHN FISHER, B. A.

LONDON

Printed for Edward Blore and
NATHANIEL THORNBOURN
in the Strand 1733.

To the Right Worshipful

Thomas Salter, Esq;

M A Y O R,

The Worshipful the

ALDERMEN and COMMON-COUNCIL

Of the C I T Y of

E X E T E R,

This DISCOURSE is with all Humility and Gratitude Dedicated, by

Their Most Obedient, and

Most Oblig'd,

Humble Servant,

JOHN FISHER.

To the Right Worshipful

Thomas Salter, Esq;

M. A. Y. O. R.

THE Worshipful the

ALDERMEN and COMMON COUNCIL

OF THE CITY OF

NEW YORK

THE DISCOLLUSION is with all His
Majesty and Gratitude Dedicated, by

Thos. Salter, Esq;

Most Obliged

Humble Servant,

JOHN FISHER.



P S A L M xxx. ver. 5.

For his Anger endureth but a Moment ; in his Favour is Life : Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning.



HERE is nothing in the whole compass of our Religion so amazing, as the Love of God, manifested in the Redemption of his People. That Man should at first be created out of nothing, endued with a Liberty of Acting, and all other Qualifications of a rational Creature ; and after (by an Abuse of this Liberty) having introduc'd Sin and Death into the World, he should not continue an eternal Object of God's Displeasure, but be put into a Method of obtaining future Favours ; are Things equally miraculous and surprising.

When our first Parents had broken their Covenant, and forfeited Paradise and Immortality, they became Children of Wrath and Disobedience ; but

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God, who will not *always be chiding*, and *keepeth not his Anger for ever*, was pleased to shew himself a Compassionate Father, rather than an Angry Judge, and proposed a Remedy, ev'n before he had pronounced Sentence: He usher'd in Judgment with Mercy, and soften'd the Condemnation with a Covenant of Grace. Since that original Corruption, we have contracted a multitude of actual Sins, and drawn out the Catalogue to an infinite length. In short, nothing can be so Astonishing as the Sins we have committed against Heaven, but the Blessings we hourly receive from thence; and the Burthen of them would be intolerable here, were it not for the Mercy we expect hereafter: For we have nothing to support us under the least Misfortune, but the Hopes of some succeeding Joy; neither could we comfort our selves under the Pressure of an anxious State, were it not for the Prospect of a blessed Futurity.

This Life is a Mixture of Happiness and Misery, Pleasure and Pain; and it so happens in this our imperfect State, that the one is, as it were, the Basis and Foundation of the other: The Idea of Pleasure, is founded on that of Pain; and a true Sense of Happiness, on a well-grounded Experience of Troubles and Calamities. Misery is the natural Result of our Transgressions, but Happiness is the Effect of Grace; the one, is Merit; the other, the Gift of God.

'Tis no small Satisfaction, amidst the uneasy Passages of Life, that we are led, as it were, by the Hand into that glorious Path of Liberty,
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which the Depravity of our Nature would incline us to deviate from; and tho' Heaviness may endure for a Night, yet the Morning dawns with a more agreeable Prospect, and brings along with it a pleasant Remembrance of former Sorrows. We have Favours bestow'd upon us for the Acceptance, and there seems to be nothing wanting to make us happy here, and hereafter, but our own Consent. He alone that gave us our Being, can and will preserve it to us; for every thing that is desirable, must proceed from him who is the Principle of Life and Breath, and all Things. And this is what the Holy Psalmist urges, as a Reason why we should commemorate the Divine Benefits with Praise and Thanksgiving: *Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints of his! and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness: For his Anger endureth but a Moment; in his Favour is Life: Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning.* In Discoursing on these Words, I shall endeavour,

- I. To prove the Supposition, That God is sometimes Angry; and then shew, how *Anger* can be ascribed to God.
- II. I shall endeavour to shew the Mercy and Clemency of God, in that *his Anger endureth but a Moment.*
- III. The Consequence of being in Favour with God; *in his Favour is Life.*

IV. That the Means which God is pleased to make use of to bring us to Happiness, are, Troubles and Afflictions: *Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning.*

Lastly, I shall draw some Inferences from the Whole, suitable to the present Occasion, and so conclude.

First, then, I am to prove the Supposition, That God is sometimes *Angry*.

If we look into the secret Recesses of our Thoughts with an impartial Eye, and view the hidden Depravities that lodge within us ; if we consider the Irregularity of our Desires, and the Unlawfulness of our Actions, the numberless Deviations from our Duty, the Odium we have thrown upon God, and the Scandal upon his Holy Religion, we shall find but little Trouble in proving this : For if the God whom we adore is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Incomprehensible, and not a Stock or a Stone, a Being senseless and inanimate, as is the Interest of some to represent him ; if he knows our Down-sitting and our Up-rising, and understandeth our Thoughts long before ; if he is Infinite, Eternal, a Being of all possible Perfections ; in short, if he is what he is, he can't but be offended at the daring Insolence of Dust and Ashes ; for the most perfect Being, is always liable to the most Wrong and Injury : And this is not an Imperfection, but the greatest Excellence ; for Wrong is an Injury or Injustice done

to a Person contrary to his Desert, and is aggravated according to the Merit of the Person wrong'd or injur'd ; so that the farthest Remove from Imperfection, is always liable to the greatest Injuries and Affronts.

This, indeed, is a strange Doctrine to an Epicurean, who thinks God has nothing to do with the Affairs of Men, and who has no other Notion of a Deity, than that of being supinely idle and at ease ; who shuts up Omnipresence in the Heavens, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain ; who limits out the Dimensions of Infinity, and circumscribes the Author of his Being : but to a Christian, who knows the Sin and Impurity of his own Breast, and has a better Scheme to walk by than the fancied Whims of *Epicurus*, ev'n the Certainty of Divine Revelation, it can't be strange nor inconsistent, but agreeable to all his other Principles which he does profess ; for God being most Perfect and Excellent in his Nature, and therefore infinitely removed from all Impurity, can't be pleased or delighted with Sin, without ceasing to be, and destroying his very Essence. Hence it is, we read of God's distributing Sorrows in his Anger ; and, *Rom. i. 18.* 'tis said, *The Wrath of God is reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness.* Nay, we read, that the very Chosen People of God provok'd him in the Wilderness, and grieved him in the Desert ; therefore was the Wrath of the Lord kindled against his People, insomuch that he abhorred

red his own Inheritance. And David saith, Ps. vii. 13, 14. *God is angry with the Wicked every Day; if he turn not, he will whet his Sword; he hath bent his Bow: he hath also prepared for him the Instruments of Death.* But then *Anger*, as it is in God, must not be understood literally as a Passion, because nothing must be ascribed to God inconsistent with his other Attributes, but in a metaphorical Sense, as it bears in the Effect of it some Analogy and Resemblance to Anger in Man; and so all other Passions, that are attributed unto God, must be understood.

For such Expressions as these, are only adapted to the weakness of our Understandings; our finite Capacities are contracted to a very small Extent, therefore God has been graciously pleased to draw a Cloud over the Brightness of his Glory, and condescended to be described by such Properties, as we our selves are, in some degree, possess'd of. Not that God is made up of Attributes and Properties as we are, or that they are in themselves distinguishable from each other, because there is nothing in God, which is not God himself; but they lie distinguish'd only in our Minds, in order to be more agreeably suited to our Conceptions: For God is the most simple, uncompounded Being, who is not circumscribed by Place, neither included within it, nor excluded without it; whose Wisdom is not different from his Justice, nor his Justice from his Power, nor his Power from his Mercy; and whose Wisdom, Justice, Power and Mercy, are not different from him-

himself; who (as we apprehend Things) is neither Substance nor Accident, Matter nor Form, Quantity nor Quality; whose Subject, Attributes, and Properties are entirely the same; who is limited to no Time, and yet is in all Times; who is Omnipresent without Parts, and Immense without Extension.

Indeed, there can be no such Thing as a positive Knowledge of God, to be had by a finite Being, because there is an infinite Disproportion between the Object and the Understanding; all that we know of him is negative and confused; by removing all Defects and Imperfections, we know that he is the most perfect Being, or rather, that he is not imperfect. We say, that he is without Bounds, upon which account we call him Infinite; that he is without Beginning or End, therefore we call him Eternal; that he is from no other Being, hence arises the Idea of Self-existence: but to know what he is, is impossible and contradictory; here our Knowledge must terminate, our eager Enquiries must stop here; the Curtain is drawn, and all behind is inaccessible.

We may frame to our selves as many strange Conceptions of Infinity as we please, and flatter our selves we have a great deal of Knowledge, couch'd under a negative Expression; we may furnish out an imaginary Deity, with insignificant Definitions, and a Jargon of unintelligible Terms; but how much nearer shall we approach him by such dark Descriptions? How can we say
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any thing of God, without derogating from his Majesty? Or how can we pretend to describe him, without being impertinent? God is not any Thing that falls under our manner of conceiving; all that the Sum of our nicest Speculations amounts to, is only this, That God is; the rest is not reconcilable to Human Nature, but is best known by him who is.

Secondly, I am to shew the Mercy and Clemency of God, in that *his Anger endureth but a Moment*. The *Wrath* and *Anger* of God, is rightly said to be of so short Continuance, in comparison to his Mercy, which knows no Bounds, and of which our Existence is a continual Token and Remembrance. We can't lift up our Voices to sing of the Loving-kindness of the Lord, without feeling the Effects of it: Every Moment of our Lives is accompanied with fresh Instances, and while we now think upon it, numberless Examples are presented to our View; for 'tis of his Mercy alone, that we are not consumed.

God does not enter into Judgment with his Servants, nor take Delight in Punishing his Creatures; and were we to be reclaimed by the gentle Methods of Love and Kindness, he would deal with us no other way; *For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*. But when all the soothing Terms of Love and Compassion will not prevail, when we abuse his Patience and Long-suffering, and make a Jest of the Offers
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of Grace, then it is we draw upon us the Divine Displeasure, and the Wrath of the Lord is kindled against us ; yet ev'n then, with what Reluctancy does he pronounce Judgment? and how short is the Continuance of his Severity? *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? Mine Heart is turned within me, and my Repentings are kindled together, Hos. xi. 8.* He is indeed a God to whom Vengeance belongeth, but yet he is a tender Father ; and tho' he is the God of Justice, yet is he not the God of Mercy too ? *He knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but Dust.*

A very remarkable Instance of the Mercy of God, may be seen, in the Deliverance he was pleased to vouchsafe this City, from the Hands of its cruel and malicious Enemies, which we are now met together to commemorate with the joyful Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving. God was pleased (for Reasons best known to himself) to suffer it to be Besieged by barbarous and restless Men, whose Religion naturally leads them into Faction, and not only perswades, but commands them to be Rebels ; yet if we consider how soon they were routed and dispers'd, and by how small a Number of Men, we must confess that the Stars in their Courses fought against them, and God was not unmindful of his Promise which he made to our Fore-fathers, *Five of you shall chase an Hundred, and an Hundred shall put Ten Thousand to Flight, and your Enemies shall fall before you by the Sword.*

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We are very often offended at the Proceedings of Providence, and very uneasy and dejected under the least Affliction, tho' it *endureth but a Moment*; whereas did we but take a few Circumstances along with us, did we consider the Shortness of its Duration, and the Horror of our own Guilt, we should find we have deserved much greater Severities, and a longer Punishment. But the Misfortune is, we are very partial Judges in our own Cause; we are always complaining about the Evils of Life, but never consider the Blessings we continually receive, as Health, Food, Raiment, &c.; whereas God hath set the one over-against the other, that Man should find nothing after him.

Indeed, we scarce know the Benefit of any one Thing we enjoy, 'till we come to be deprived of it; for Example, the Blessing of Children, which is not the least among the Comforts and Satisfaction of Life, is very often misconstrued, by the Narrowness of our Fortunes, and the Cares of the World; and we cheat our selves into an Opinion, that they are only so many Burthens and Incumbrances upon us: but when they *go hence, and are no more seen*, they leave behind them a melancholy Remembrance of our once neglected Happiness; Paternal Affection rectifies the Mistake, and we cry over them, as David over his Son *Absalom*, *O, my Son Absalom! my Son! my Son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom! my Son! my Son!*

Man is, indeed, the sublimest Part of the Creation; he has received the greatest Blessings, and is the most capable of setting a proper Estimate upon them; but Man is regardless and unthankful, insensible of his own Good, and of that true and perfect Happiness, which he pretends is the End of all his Endeavours to obtain.

If God speaks to us in Thunder, we tremble and are afraid; if, to sooth us with the more gentle Methods of his Love, he speaks with a Still Voice, we grow disdainful and imperious; and tho' neither the threatening Precepts of the Law, nor the milder Perswasions of the Gospel, have any Effect upon us, yet *to the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgivenesses; though we have rebelled against him, and have not obeyed the Voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his Laws which he hath set before us.*

The Mercy of God is so pathetically describ'd to us, that one would think all his other Attributes were swallowed up in that: 'Tis said to be that wherein he takes Delight, *Micah vii. 18. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the Remnant of his Heritage? he retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy.* And he is in another Place called, *The Father of all Mercies*: The Greatness of it we have describ'd in the 108th Psalm, *For thy Mercy is great above the Heavens, and thy Truth reacheth unto the Clouds;* and the Extensiveness of it in *Psa. cxlv. 9.*

His Mercy is over all his Works. And the Holy Psalmist, when he would shew the Reasonableness of Religion, which is often understood by this Phrase, *Fearing God*; founds it upon Mercy; --- *For there is Mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared.*

This is the God whom we adore, and this his Goodness and Complacency, which if we will endeavour to imitate in our Lives, we shall undoubtedly receive those Blessings which are so often said in Scripture to be the Consequence of it. We presume sometimes to imitate God in those Attributes, which are inimitable in their Natures, and incommunicable to us; such as his Infinity, Omnipotence, &c. But why don't we endeavour to imitate him in those which are communicable to us, and are proper Patterns for our Imitation? The former is indeed impracticable; but we may in some good measure study the latter. Tho' we can't be Infinite, Omnipotent, &c. yet we may be Good, Merciful, and Benevolent; but we are uneasy at each other's Happiness, implacable, studious of Revenge; we are void of Pity and Compassion, and, what is most amazing, we don't shew that Mercy to others, which we expect to receive our selves: We are angry, and the Sun goes down; it rises and sets again, and still our Anger remains; tho' in him who is infinitely provoked to it, *it endureth but a Moment.* Upon the Whole, then, *'Tis better to fall into the Hands of God, than into the Hands of Men*; for as his Majesty is, so is his Mercy.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I am to shew the Consequence of being in Favour with God. And here let us consider, First, What we are to do, to obtain his Favour; and this, we shall find, is not by imposing upon our selves any grievous Hardships and Severities, or by observing any new Precepts, or performing any other Duties which were not enjoyn'd before; but only by doing what we have oblig'd our selves to do, by ratifying our Baptismal Covenant, and being Christians in reality, as we acknowledge our selves to be by Profession. In short, 'tis nothing but observing the agreeable Duties of Religion; *For what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk Humbly with thy God?* And what is all this, but what we should observe, whether there was any Covenant, Contract, or Obligation at all? For 'tis very consistent with Reason, and conducive to our Happiness here, and hereafter. How easy then is it to gain the Favour of God, when 'tis done by acting up to the Perfection of our Nature, and according to the Dictates of right Reason.

Having thus consider'd how the Favour of God is to be obtain'd, we are in the next place to consider the Consequence of it. *Solomon*, in his Description of an Earthly Prince, says, *In the Light of the King's Countenance is Life, and his Favour is as a Cloud of the latter Rain.* How much more, then, shall the King of Kings be a Rewarder of them that fear him? *Godliness is profitable*

profitable unto all Things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. As for this Life, it improves our Understandings, and rectifies our Wills, subdues our Lusts, and moderates our Passions, purifies our Bodies, and refines our Souls; it conduces to the publick Interest, and the private Good, to the regulating our selves, and the well-governing of others, to the Prosperity of States and Kingdoms, and the Peace and Tranquility of single Persons. As for that which is to come, *it works out for us an exceeding and eternal weight of Glory:* And this has no less Foundation than the Veracity of God, which can't be defective, if we consider, that God is Infinite in Knowledge, and therefore can't possibly be deceived himself; Infinite in Goodness, and therefore will not deceive others; and Infinite in Power, and therefore is able to do all Things: Not that this Extensiveness of Power can be said to reach to any Thing contrary to his Justice, Goodness, or any other of his Perfections; for all manner of Contradictions, *i. e.* those that are simply and absolutely such, as for God to Lie, &c. are entirely struck off from Power, because the Object of Power is every Thing possible; and the greater the Impossibility is in the Thing, the more must it be removed from the Limits of Power.

But if we can't bring our selves to the Performance of Religious Duties, out of Inclination and Choice, yet we ought to do it out of a Principle of Self-interest. What Reward can we propose

pose to our selves by being Slaves to the World? Or what Enjoyments have we that are commensurate to the Pain and Trouble we undergo in this Life? Happiness is indeed what we are all naturally desirous of, but what we have of it in this Life is improperly called so; yet we are pleased with the Mistake, and hug the Cheat with Satisfaction and Delight: How shall we be delighted then with the *New Jerusalem*, where is Happiness in a proper Sense, infinite in Degree, and infinite in Duration?

'Tis agreeable to all the common Sense and Reason in the World, To fix our Hopes where we are sure of some Dependance: But when the Things of this Life draw to a Conclusion, when the Scene is shifted, the Fashion of this World altered, and all Things are closed up in Death, where are our Hopes? What is our Dependance? But if our Hopes are fix'd upon a proper Object, and our Dependance is built upon a good Foundation, *when these Houses of Clay shall be dissolved, we shall have Habitations not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.*

Besides, in this Life, our Understandings, at best, are contracted to a narrow Compass, and our Judgments weak and imperfect: 'Tis with Pain and Difficulty we are brought to understand any thing of an abstracted Nature; our Reason is not calculated to apprehend Things so large and extensive, we are cramped in our Enquiries, and bounded in our Conceptions. Look where we please, we see insuperable Difficulties,
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the Object is not proportion'd to the Understanding, and Infinites surround us on every side. Our own Composition is a Mystery to us, and so is almost every Thing else, such is our Condition in this Life: but when we have shaken off Mortality, and the Incumbrances of the Natural Body, we shall see Things as they are in themselves, and not be deceived by the false Glass of Error. No Ignorance shall cloud the Understanding, no Vice disturb the Will, nor any Sense of Guilt distract the Conscience; then *the Righteous shall have his Reward, and the Pure in Heart shall see God.* No Cares shall molest our Thoughts, nor Troubles sour our Enjoyments; nothing but Love shall possess our Souls, and Gratitude employ our Tongues: But this is a small Part of the Happiness of a future State; the rest, 'tis to be hoped, we shall be able one Day to describe with Pleasure. This, then, is the Consequence of being *in Favour with God*; how great is the Reward, and how easy are the Means to obtain it? We undergo greater Hardships than any Duties which Religion enjoins, only to obtain a Trifle; and yet for the Performance of an easy Task, we have *an Eternal Reward*. The greatest of our Worldly Expectations must terminate on this side the Grave, but those that have God for their Object, will have Heaven for their Fruition; for he will shew us the Path of Life: *In his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, I am to shew, That the Means God is pleased to make use of to bring us to Happiness, are, *Troubles and Afflictions*. God has been pleased, out of his infinite Love to Mankind, to order, That the Way to Happiness shall be *thro' the Vale of Misery*; and gives us some slight Punishment in this World, to prevent Eternal Wrath in the next: And yet how often is this misunderstood by us? And because we can't see the End and Design of Things, how soon are we apt to call it Injustice and Severity?

The Ways of Providence are dark and intricate, full of Labyrinths and Perplexities; and we are never led into so many Errors and Mistakes, as when we endeavour to find out those untrodden Paths, and trace the Foot-steps of the Almighty; for *his Way is in the Sea, and his Path in the great Waters, and his Foot-steps are not known*. There is something in our Natures that makes us uneasy in every State and Condition of Life; in Adversity, we are murmuring and complaining; in Prosperity, we are haughty and arrogant; as if we were entitled to the latter, and the former was an unjust Imposition: but in the End, nothing will work upon us so much as Afflictions. David says, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes*: And in another Place, *Before I was afflicted, I went wrong, but now have I kept thy Word*. Thus the Children of Israel, whom God had in a wonderful manner preserved in the Wilderness, when they

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had eaten and were full, remembred not his Hand, nor the Day when he deliver'd them from the Enemy: But when the Wrath of God came upon them, then they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after God; and they remembred that God was *their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer.* We must know the want of Ease and Content, before we shall be brought to ask it; and we must be deprived of Happiness, before we shall be in the Mind to pray for it. A lingering Distemper, very often brings that Man to a true Sense of his Duty, whom all the Comforts of Life cannot prevail upon. Diseases are our useful Monitors; they serve to bring down our aspiring Thoughts, and to let us know, that Pride was not made for Man, nor furious Anger for him that is born of a Woman; and however impatient we may be under God's Visitations, yet 'tis very obvious and plain, that our Afflictions are founded upon the Love and Compassion of God, and that he shews his Mercy to us, ev'n in making us Miserable.

There are many Things which are in themselves Evil; yet, by Accident, they prevent greater Evils, and become good and profitable to us. The Afflictions of God, are in themselves Evil; yet they are useful, in preventing the greater Evil of Sin, which is a moral Evil; and, as a Consequence of that, procure us the greatest Good. Punishment will awaken us into a serious Consideration of our eternal Welfare, and strike out those deceitful Images and Notions of Things,

Things, which a State of Affluence and Ease might have imprinted upon our Minds: for if God did not sometimes deal roughly with us, and make us feel *the Rod of Affliction*, we should either think there was no God at all, or that Righteousness and Judgment was not the *Habitation of his Seat*; and this is true, whether we consider it in a general or particular Sense. What Nation is there that *seeks after Righteousness*, 'till *Judgment is gone abroad in the Earth*? Or what Person is there that looks after *the Things that belong to his Peace*, before they are well nigh *hid from his Eyes*? We are taught to be Compassionate, by suffering Losses and Misfortunes; to be Liberal to the Poor, by Hardships and Calamities; and to shew Mercy to all Men, by undergoing a sufficient Share of Misery our Selves. But what are Troubles? What are Sorrows? What are Misfortunes? when they shall be *turned into Joy*, and our *Joy no Man taketh from us*. How pleasant will it be to *sow in Tears*, when we are sure to *reap in Joy*?

Another Life will clear up the Difficulties of this, and shew us an easy Method of reconciling the various Proceedings of Providence; 'twill make us sensible of the numberless Mistakes we have imposed upon our selves, and the rash and inconsiderate Imputations of Severity and Injustice we have all along thrown upon God. We shall then see the Harmony and Agreement of the present seeming Contradictions, and enjoy the Pleasure and Satisfaction that will arise from our pre-

sent Misfortunes; we shall discover the infinite Wisdom of God, in disposing the different Kinds of Punishments; we shall see his Justice, Goodness and Mercy, that have given us such Uneasiness and Offence; and all our surprising Paradoxes will appear to be plain and manifest Truths: In short, we shall see Things in a different Light, and with the Eyes of a more exalted Understanding; and we shall find, to our unspeakable Comfort, that God, who has *brought forth his People with Joy, and his Chosen with Gladness*, will, according to his Promise, reward our momentary Misery with eternal Happiness; *For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee; in a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.*

In the Last Place, I am to draw some Inferences from the Whole, suitable to the present Occasion, and so Conclude.

And, *First*, It may be inferred, that since God is sometimes Angry with us, as it has been made appear, it must be for our Offences; therefore we must not expostulate with him concerning the Justice of those Troubles and Afflictions which we have brought upon our selves, nor repine at the severe Dispensations of Providence; *for it is the Lord, who will do what seemeth him good; the Lord is King, be the People never so impatient;*

tient; he sitteth between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so unquiet.

Secondly, We may infer, That if the Anger of God is of so short Continuance, and is, at the same time, the Means of our future Happiness, it demands our chiefest Acknowledgments of Praise and Thanksgiving. If God is to be Thank'd at all, or if *Thanksgiving* be ever a Duty, 'tis certainly so when we receive any signal Mercies and Deliverances. God is undoubtedly to be Praised for his Infinite Wisdom, manifested in the surprising Order and Beauty of the Universe; but he is no less to be Praised for his Infinite Goodness, in preserving what he has created; and for disposing Events, that appear to us of no Contrivance, to some excellent End; and ordering those Effects, which we too rashly ascribe to Accident and Chance, to be produced by certain and regular Means, though to us unknown.

Gratitude is the only Tribute we can offer to God, for the Blessings he has bestowed upon us: We can indeed make him no Recompence, but we can make him an Acknowledgment; we can't render him his due, but we can pay him Tribute; we can't answer the Demands of his Justice, but we may be accepted on the favourable Conditions of his Mercy: And how easy a Task is this? the most delightful in its Performance, the most sublime in its Nature, and the most acceptable to God.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It may be inferr'd, That if *Eternal Life* is to be obtained by and through the Favour of God, then we ought to regulate our Actions, and make our Lives conformable to that Being, upon whom all our Hopes and Dependance are fix'd. If God is *the Sole Fountain of all Good*; if All Things subsist by him, and Nothing can subsist without him; if we depend upon him for the Continuance of our Beings, as well as for our Future Happiness; in short, if by the natural Frame and Constitution of our Bodies, we are liable to be reduced to our Primitive Nothing, and sent to *the Land where all Things are forgotten*; then, certainly, we ought to live so, as to answer the Ends of our Creation, and preserve an Interest in that Being, who gives us all the Good that we do or can enjoy.

There is no People, since the *Jews* were a flourishing Nation, that have received more Blessings than we of this Island; and This, among the rest, which we now commemorate, ought to be Treasur'd up in the Breasts of all *True Englishmen*; since their Lives, Liberties, and Religion depended upon the Issue of this Barbarous and Cruel Insurrection, which was contriv'd to overturn the Government and Laws, and every Thing else that was Dear and Valuable. I should trespass too much upon you, should I describe the dreadful Consequences that would have attended their Success, (had they gotten the Victory;) you are already too well acquainted with such Descriptions, and

and are too sensible of the dismal Effects of Arbitrary Power both in Church and State. What Honour our Ancestors have, by their Loyalty, procured to this City, whom Death, in all its frightful and horrid Shapes, could not prevail upon to surrender, will never be forgotten; and as the present *Loyal Body* have inherited the * *Semper Fidelis* of their Fore-fathers, so may it descend to their Posterity for ever.

We have received Blessings publick and private, and have wanted nothing but a true Sense of valuing them; we have been blest'd with Food and Raiment, Peace and Plenty, Satisfaction and Content; and in all the various Turns and Revolutions of Governments, we have seen the Hand of the Lord directing every thing for our future Good; we enjoy our Lives without Slavery, and our Fortunes without Oppression; we may be Religious without Superstition, and Zealous without Madnes; we may worship God without Idolatry, and have a pious Remembrance of his Saints without adoring them; we have wholesome Laws and a pure Religion; we have no Bias upon our Reason, nor Fetters upon our Conscience; and tho' we have sometimes tasted of Arbitrary Power, and been threatned with it often, yet *the Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious*, but, by supernatural Means, eased us from

* The Honourable Motto, which was given this City by Queen Elizabeth.

that Burthen which *Englishmen* are not accustomed to bear.

Whilst we see our Neighbours distressed, and their Countries wasted, some by the Sword, some by Famine, some by the Plague; *while Thousands fall beside us, and Ten Thousands at our Right Hand*; yet (as if we were the Favourites of Heaven, and the only Hopes of a degenerate World) nothing of this is permitted to approach our Borders, nor any Plague to come nigh our Dwelling. But then we must not be too rash, in attributing those Things to Second Causes, which work according to a certain Determination put upon them; for they are only Instruments in the Hand of God, and are properly no Causes at all: but we must attribute them to the All-wise Governor of the World, who *defendeth his Servants as with a Shield*.

But notwithstanding all these Blessings, are we not still Uneasy and Discontented? Are we not weary of Liberty, and tired with Freedom? Don't we admire Slavery, and court Oppression? Some, out of a tender Regard they have to be in Chains; others, purely out of a Spirit of Opposition. But why such Intestine Broils in a Protestant Country? Why have we not rather Peace and Concord amongst us? And if we call our selves Christians, Why are we nominal ones only, and not Christians in reality? The Name of *Christ*, or the *Church*, will be of very little use to
us,

us, unless we believe in the one, and follow the Rules of the other: And though some People have made use of the latter to vile and wicked Purposes, yet 'twas never designed to be a Sanctuary for Rogues, nor a Refuge for Traytors. It will not screen the Drunkard, nor shelter the Debauchee, support the Intemperate, nor encourage the Lascivious.

Let not the Sot, who in the Intervals of his Cups, cries out, *I am for the Church*, and, as well as he can speak, wrangle about Doctrines he is resolved not to believe; let not such a One be mistaken for a Man of Religion, or be thought any other way meritorious, than by getting Scandal to himself, and throwing an Odium upon Christianity: Neither let that Man who breaks through all the Ties of Honour and Honesty, the Laws of God and his own Conscience, and indeed almost every other Duty of a Christian, (if there is any Meaning in Words) let not such a One be called a Church-Man; neither let him be called an Honest Man, whom all Men know to be a Knave: But if People will raise a new Faction and Party to themselves, invert the very Nature of Things, and put a new Intention upon Words, contrary to the received Opinion; let them answer for the Consequence, we have no such Custom, nor the Church of God.

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However, therefore, a Man may Bellow about Religion, whatever Noise he may make about the Church; he is the only True Church-Man, who observes those good Laws and Rules which the Church enjoyns, and which are founded on the Word of God. We have a Church which our Enemies envy and admire; and had we Church-Men too, (I mean Real Ones, for we have more Nominal Ones than we desire) then should we have some Cause to expect a Continuance of those Blessings we have already received; and the Enemy shall have no Advantage of us. *For those that fight against us shall be as a Dream of a Night-Vision; it shall even be as when a Hungry Man Dreameth, and behold he Eateth, but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty; or, As when a Thirsty Man Dreameth, and behold he Drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is Faint, and his Soul hath Appetite; so shall the Multitude of all the Nations be that Fight against Mount Zion.*

In a word, Let us live suitably to the Religion we profess; and let not Infidelity and Prophaneness be the Badges of a Christian, but a Heathen: Let us Fear God, and Honour the King, and put a Stop to those Heats and Animosities which are unhappily kindled among us; *That we may have Peace within our Walls, and Plenteousness within our Palaces; That our Sons may grow up as the Young Plants, and that our Daughters may be as the polished Corners of the Temple.*

Temple ; That our Garners may be full and plentiful with all all manner of Store ; That there be no Decay, no Leading into Captivity, and no Complaining in our Streets : For happy are the People that are in such a Case ; Yea, Blessed are the People who have the Lord for their God.

F I N I S



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